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LIE DETECTOR ORDER CALLED CIVIL LIBERTIES ISSUE
BY JUDI HASSON

President Reagan's new directive to plug the leaks of classified information raises serious civil liberties concerns and "smacks of a government that just bullies its people," critics said Saturday.

Rep. Don Edwards, D-Calif., said the administration order requiring federal employees with security clearances to submit to lie detector tests in a leak investigation has "a totalitarian ring to it."

Edwards said the House civil and constitutional rights subcommittee, which he chairs, will hold hearings.

Reagan, increasingly annoyed over leaks of classified information to the media and others, issued the order Friday. It establishes for the first time a standard policy on using lie detector tests.

The order requires all federal agencies to amend their policies to allow polygraph tests and warns that workers who refuse to take a test, if requested, may be subject to "adverse consequences."

In the past, federal employees could take a lie detector test voluntarily but were not penalized if they refused. Only the CIA, the National Security Agency and certain parts of the Justice and Defense Departments could require workers to submit to lie detector tests.

In addition, more federal employees having access to ultra-sensitive classified material now must promise to submit manuscripts to the government for review before publication.

"Safeguarding against unlawful disclosures of properly classified information is a matter of grave concern and high priority for this administration," Reagan said in the directive affecting hundreds of thousands of federal workers.

But Edwards, a former FBI agent, said making polygraph tests mandatory raises serious constitutional questions because the procedure makes "people snitch on themselves."

In addition, he said, a polygraph is not an accurate measure of a person's honesty and is so unreliable that the results of a test are not allowed into evidence in federal court cases.

"It just smacks of a government that just bullies its people," Edwards said.

David Landau, legislative director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said the directive is a very serious civil liberties issue and part of the Reagan administration's pattern of stopping the free flow of information.

"It is an attempt to stifle dissent within government and stop the flow of information from the government to the American people," Landau said.

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